

## Public awareness of codeine scheduling

WHILE the 01 Feb 2018 rescheduling of products containing codeine has been on the radar of pharmacists, prescribers and industry stakeholders for more than 12 months, public awareness of the matter and its implications is only now ramping up, with mainstream media highlighting the changes in a number of festive season stories.

Pharmacists can expect a stronger influx of concerned patients who take these products regularly, following media reports of dire consequences and fears of not being able to manage their pain without a visit to their less accessible GP.

Half page articles and snippet comments are appearing more regularly as each commentator takes up the gauntlet to add their spin, but the end result is usually a reference to consulting "your pharmacist" and/or GP, creating an anticipated wave of inquiries during Jan and Feb this year.

Both the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia have been working with the Federal Government to develop and deliver training programs for pharmacists and pharmacy assistants (PD 04 Sep 17) to help them manage through the transition.

## NAPSA AMH winner



CAELA Crane, president of the South Australian Pharmacy Students' Association, has won a copy of the Australian Medicines Handbook as part of the 2017 NAPSA National Pharmacy Student Survey competition.

## Sigma targets AZ direct

PHARMACIES affiliated with Sigma Healthcare are being encouraged to take commercial action in

response to AstraZeneca's (AZ) move to direct distribution of some of its products (PD 31 Oct 17), with Amcal and Guardian members

informed of changes to discounts and generous incentives to convert sales from AZ molecules to their generic equivalents.

A letter was sent from Sigma to pharmacies just before Christmas, detailing issues around the AZ initiative which will "fragment distribution, complicate the supply chain for pharmacy, and undermine a system that delivers universal access to all medicines".

Sigma is targeting a "narrow but effective" range of twelve molecules, which will have discounts removed from the AZ products and added to the generic equivalent items.

"The generic providers have committed to generous incentives to assist," the company said, with additional benefits provided for increased conversion between January and March 2018.

"This united response will send a clear message to AZ and others considering the move," the letter,

## Vic Guild refreshers

THE Victorian branch of the Pharmacy Guild will host a face to face training session later this month for staff interested in completing a 'SIRCIND002 Support the Supply of Pharmacy and Pharmacist Only Medicines' workbook with the aid of a qualified Guild Trainer.

The S2/S3 session takes place on Wed 24 Jan from 6pm, while a QCPP Approved Refresher for pharmacy assistants will be hosted on Wed 21 Feb 2018 - more information on 03 9810 9988.

signed by Sigma Healthcare general manager of wholesale sales, Vin Gualtieri, advises.



AstraZeneca products targeted under the Sigma plan include Arimidex, Cosudex, Atacand, Nexium, Imdur, Toiprol, Seroquel, Crestor and Zomig.

Gualtieri also urged pharmacists to elevate the issue by contacting Health Minister Greg Hunt, registering concerns with the Guild and contacting their local MP.

"We can choose to take decisive action now to effect change, or we can accept the status quo and risk more PBS products being distributed exclusively by alternative suppliers, which will inevitably lead to a new norm of complicated minimum orders, delivery fees, less timely access, and further erosion of discounts," the letter concludes.

## Delayed clinical intervention payment

THE Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement Claims Team has advised it is experiencing some delays with the Clinical Intervention payment for the period from 01 July-31 October 2017.

According to the GCPA website payment for the claims is expected to be made early this month.

MEANWHILE claiming for PPI clinical interventions for the 01 October-31 December 2017 claiming period is now open, with claims required to be lodged by 14 Jan 2018.

## FDA Giapreza tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved Giapreza (angiotensin II) injection for intravenous infusion from La Jolla Pharmaceuticals, to increase blood pressure in adults with septic or other distributive shock.

## PBS additions for lung, blood cancers

AROUND 800 Australians are set to benefit from the 01 Jan Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) funding for drugs to treat myeloma (cancer of plasma cells) and lung cancer, Health Minister Greg Hunt announced in a media release.

The funding is part of a \$7.5b program to add new drugs that "over the course of the last four years, is one of the most important things we could possibly have done," Hunt said.

The two additions for Jan are Amgen's Kyprolis (carfilzomib) for multiple myeloma benefiting around 550 Australians and Roche Products' Alecensa (alectinib) for small cell lung cancer, helping some 250 patients.

"Virtually no Australian family, as I say, could afford a drug of \$138,000 or \$188,000," Hunt added.

"For that suddenly to be available at \$6.40 a script for concession patients, which is most, that's an incredible change in their lives."

## Full PBS picture

MEDICINES Australia has noted that while the top line figure for PBS expenditure has increased to \$12.058 billion (PD 22 Dec 2017), this figure is "somewhat misleading" because it does not take into account that \$3.2 billion was repaid to the government via rebates from pharmaceutical companies.

That in turn means the actual PBS spend was \$8.858 billion, meaning the cost of the PBS remains flat thanks to the rebates paid by the pharmaceutical industry.

## My Chemist tops poll

MY CHEMIST has taken out the top spot in the Nov 2017 Customer Satisfaction Awards conducted by Roy Morgan Research.

Discount Drug Stores was in second place, followed by Guardian Pharmacy, Terry White and then Priceline Pharmacy in fifth position.

The results were collated from a sample of 9,339 consumers over the period Dec 16-Nov 17.



## Dispensary Corner

**ASTRONAUTS** at the International Space Station have perhaps taken nutritional advice to consume lighter foods too literally - by making pizzas they can fling like frisbees before eating.

Created from scratch pizza pies, the crew members spent some time spinning food at each other and taking some choice selfies before consuming their creations.

The experience was described as like having contact with "flying saucers of the edible kind", however, some of the astronauts were promptly scolded by their respective mothers for violating the golden rule of never playing with one's food.



**IT TOOK** a serious heart attack for a man from New Zealand to decide to take his palaeontology more seriously.

As strange as that connection sounds, Glen Wilson was recuperating in hospital when he remembered digging up a what he suspected was a dinosaur fossil 10 years earlier.

He promptly headed back to inland near Mount Damper in Taranaki and recovered the fossil which he believes belongs to a creature that was either a whale or a dinosaur.

Wilson wants dinosaur experts to help identify his find, or a cardiologist if it's just a whale.

## Medicinal cannabis guidance

**EVIDENCE-BASED** guidance documents on the use of medicinal cannabis have been released to Australian consumers and health professionals by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) following extensive research and consultation.

Health professionals have long held concerns around supportive evidence when trying to meet the needs and expectations of patients wanting to access cannabis for a range of therapeutic uses.

"The Commonwealth Department of Health, in conjunction with state and territory governments, has helped coordinate the development of new clinical guidance documents for prescribers of medicinal cannabis products for treating chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, chronic non-cancer pain and palliative care, as well as an overview document," the TGA announced.

Universities of New South Wales, Sydney and Queensland co-ordinated by the National Drug and

Alcohol Research Centre reviewed the clinical evidence for the use of medicinal cannabis that had been published in refereed medical journals since 1980.

A number of organisations around Australia developed the guidance documents springing from the research: 18 patient and consumer representative groups, all state and territory health departments, 15 health care professional organisations, clinical staff from 29 hospitals and health care systems and 14 outpatient or primary health networks.

The TGA said the documents which include both healthcare professional and consumer direction, have also been endorsed by the Australian Advisory Council on the Medicinal Use of Cannabis.

As well as overview documents for health professionals and consumers, each of the researched therapeutic uses have their own complete guidance documents.

Visit [tga.gov.au](http://tga.gov.au) to see all documents, a Q&A section and how to access medicinal cannabis.



## WIN WITH INNOXA

Each day this week Pharmacy Daily and INNOXA are giving away a Flawless Face pack.

INNOXA Cosmetics introduces their latest colour cosmetics range for you to achieve a stunning flawless face every time you step out the door. Created with subtle golden bronze, pink and coral inspired tones, the range is finely milled so it doesn't sit in fine lines and wrinkles. Consisting of four eyeshadow quads, three blushes and a bronzer, all skin tones are covered to create the polished look. **CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE** for more info.

To win, be the first person from NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

What products are in the range?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.



## Guild Update

**AS EVERYONE** in pharmacy knows, from 01 Feb 2018 all combination medicines containing codeine will be rescheduled as Prescription Only Medicines.

Managing the rescheduling of combination medicines containing codeine is challenging, but this can be minimised through careful planning.

The Guild and PSA have developed a series of five modules to assist pharmacy assistants to understand the change to scheduling of these medicines.

The two organisations have collaborated to develop the package of materials - designed to support pharmacists and pharmacy assistants.

One of the education modules, "Scheduling changes: understanding the business impacts" is for all pharmacy assistants, and includes information about:

- Assisting customers
- Ordering medicines and products
- Displaying products on shelves, and
- Promoting your pharmacy's products and services.

To enrol in this course please visit [www.myCPD.org.au](http://www.myCPD.org.au).

Please contact Guild Learning and Development on 03 9810 9930 or email [learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au](mailto:learninganddevelopment@guild.org.au) for more information.